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16 April 1960




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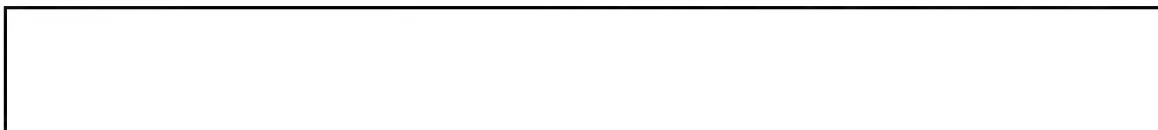
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 41
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S B
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: JUN 1980 REVIEWER: 

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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2002/10/21 : CIA-RDP79T00975A005000410001-0

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DAILY BRIEF

II. ASIA-AFRICA

NO Afghanistan-USSR: [On 14 April Afghan Prime Minister Daud left Vienna for Moscow. Daud made a similar trip to Moscow in 1959, an action which led to the agreement on the Kushka-Kandahar road project. In Moscow, Daud will probably discuss the Soviet assistance programs in Afghanistan, and may also discuss support for Kabul in its difficulties with Pakistan.]

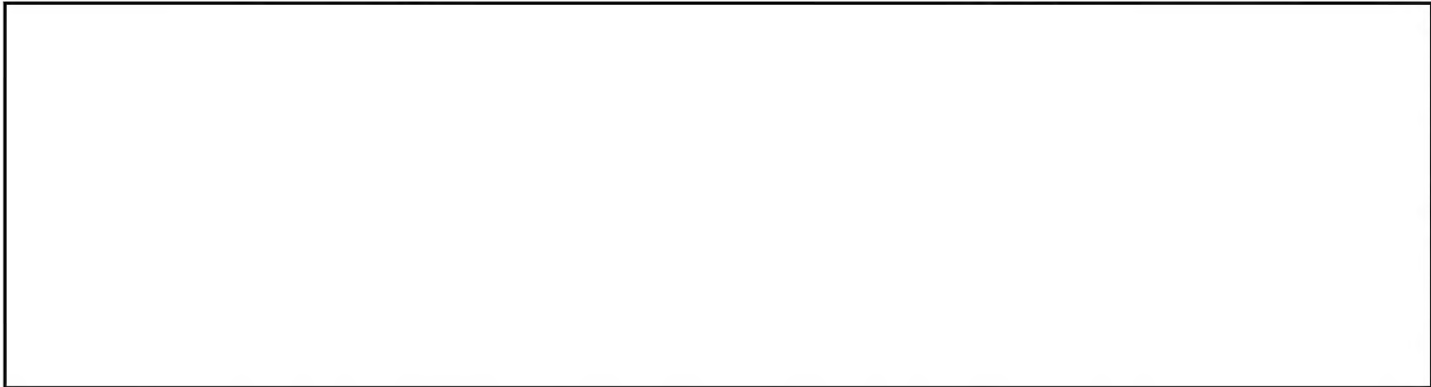
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OK Cambodia: The death of King Suramarit on 3 April has led to a test of strength between Prince Sihanouk and palace circles on the succession to the throne. Since Suramarit did not designate an heir, the new King must be chosen by the Council of the Crown from among eligible princes. Sihanouk, who resigned pro forma as premier on 11 April, is now refusing to form a new government. He is expected to win out over his palace opponents in controlling the selection of Suramarit's successor.

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OK
Rhodesia and Nyasaland: The political future of the white-dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland appears "extremely bleak," in the opinion of well-informed British Labor party officials following discussions with Nyasaland African leader Hastings Banda. Banda, just recently released from prison, appears determined to take Nyasaland out of the federation, and this will probably be an issue at the constitutional discussions scheduled for London in July. Meanwhile, the white prime minister of Southern Rhodesia, who will be in London later this month, has stated publicly that he is "not prepared to take no for an answer" in his efforts to secure the removal of British restrictions on Southern Rhodesia's power to enact racial legislation.

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III. THE WEST



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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Cambodian Political Situation Unsettled

Events since the death of King Suramarit on 3 April have resulted in a highly unsettled political situation in Cambodia. The Council of the Crown has not yet chosen a successor to the throne from among the eligible princes, apparently because of a clash of interests between powerful palace elements and Prince Sihanouk, who abdicated the throne in 1955 to take an active part in politics. The constitution was hastily modified to create a three-man regency council to act in the interregnum, and Prince Monireth, Sihanouk's uncle and frequent critic, was named council chairman.

Sihanouk submitted a pro forma resignation as premier on 11 April and has balked at forming a new government. In a rambling explanation of his actions to the Cambodian public, Sihanouk hit strongly at palace intrigue and corruption and expressed a preference to serve the nation "outside the government."

These unusual developments have given rise to a flood of rumors ranging from speculation on the formation of a republican form of government to a possible army coup. These rumors are considered exaggerated, but there are unusually large numbers of troops at the palace, internal security officers training abroad have been recalled, and Sihanouk has ordered armed forces chief General Lon Nol to postpone a visit to the United States.

Sihanouk's views in this showdown are expected to prevail, since he enjoys broad popular support and the loyalty of the military. The conflict may, however, weaken the institution of the monarchy, which is a major factor in national unity and a bulwark against Communism. It may also further damage relations with South Vietnam and Thailand, if Sihanouk uses Cambodia's disputes with these countries to rally greater support behind him.

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Future of Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Appears Gloomy

[Growing political and racial problems imperil the existence of the white-dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Ranking members of the British Labor party, who include James Callaghan, the party's spokesman on colonial affairs, characterized the federation's prospects as "extremely bleak" following conversations with Nyasaland nationalist leader Dr. Hastings Banda. Some Conservative MPs have expressed similar views.]

[Pressure by Nyasaland nationalists for early self-government and secession of the protectorate from the federation has increased since Banda's recent release from prison. British officials have agreed to discuss Nyasaland's future in July with Banda, although any concessions satisfactory to him would probably be considered unacceptable by the federation government. At present, there is little agitation in Nyasaland, in compliance with Banda's call for calm. If he is dissatisfied with London's offer in July, however, he will probably spur a renewal of nationalist violence.]

[White groups in Northern and Southern Rhodesia--the federation's other two territories--are increasing their demands for continued dominance. In Northern Rhodesia a white politician has gained impressive support for his recently organized association to oppose rapid Africanization of the area. He calls for formation of a self-governing state in the small, mineral-rich Copperbelt area--to be linked with Southern Rhodesia--if Britain should accede to black pressure for an African regime on Northern Rhodesia's 80,000 white settlers.]

[The prime minister of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Edgar Whitehead, said on 13 April he "would not take no for an answer" from London when he demands the removal of Britain's veto powers over his government's right to legislate on racial affairs. The matter will be discussed when he visits London in late April to discuss the political evolution of this self-governing colony.]

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